

WHISPERS OF THE WOOD



**FAME
SYSTEMS**
INC.

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WORDS FROM THE WOOD

Well, summer is here and you can here the sighs of relief from all those Middle-earth PBM™ players who hold positions in the far north. On the other hand, those players in the southern deserts are already hoping for fall and winter! Oh well, you can't please all of the people all of the time... Summer means something else, as well. GENCON/ORIGINS '92!! Yes, this year they are together again in Milwaukee 19-22 August, 1992. And if it's anything like the bash they had a few years ago, you don't want to miss it! We'll have a booth again in the section shared by ICE and our yearly seminar and question/answer session is scheduled for 8-9:45 P.M. on Thursday evening. So set your clocks, diary your schedules, and come on by!

If you haven't heard by now, GSI practically 'owns' issue #37 of FLAGSHIP Magazine. It featured a Middle-earth review, a Middle-earth diary article, a Venom review, and some generally very good press! If you would like to get yourself an issue and read all about it, then contact FLAGSHIP for the 'GSI Sample Issue OFFER' at PO Box 3086, Ashland, OR 97520. Issue #37 will be discounted 50% to you and will cost only \$3.00! Or you can get a trial subscription for \$26.00 and the subscription will start with issue #37. You're guaranteed that if you're disappointed you can get a full \$26.00 refund and still keep issue #37! How can you go wrong?

Some players have complained that they have had problems getting through on the phone with their questions. To reduce these problems, we would like to announce new phone availability and re-announce our phone hours. If you have game questions, problems, or generally need help, we will be glad to accept calls at (305) 274-5559 between the hours of 2-5 EST. If this line is in use, then you may call (305) 274-2302 also. Please do not call before 2 P.M. because we need that time to get that day's turns into/through the computer system and the fewer interruptions the better. If you are calling to have your turn read to you (\$3), please use the 274-2302 number no sooner than the day FOLLOWING your turn's due date. We don't have call waiting on that line and there should be no interruptions. Of course, 274-2302 is still the fax line 24 hrs a day and the answering machine line from 6 P.M. - 9 A.M., but now you can use it for questions too! (But after 2 P.M. please...)

In order to help our customers get the best service available, we are looking into getting larger envelopes for those thick ME-PBM turns. These would be 6x9 size and your turns would only be folded in half. Let's have your thoughts on whether you think that this type of change is a needed improvement or not. If we do go to the larger envelopes, they would probably be in use in the next 2 months.

'Creatures of Middle-earth' was out of stock for a while but is now available again to those players who want to order that ICE product. So, send us your order and we'll get it right out to you!

REMEMBER: Players who send us their 9 DIGIT ZIPCODES have fewer problems with the US Postal Service. 3-week games of ME-PBM are filling regularly, so if you need that extra time for your turns, sign up now! 3rd Edition rules for ME-PBM are now available which incorporate all of the changes and rules clarifications that have developed over the past year.



ALONG THE PATHWAYS

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WHISPERS OF THE WOOD is a monthly publication primarily for the use and enjoyment of GSI players of EARTHWOOD, EARTHWOOD - THE SEA KINGS, STATE OF WAR, AND ME-PBM™. Subscription rates: \$15.00 for one year (12 issues) or \$25.00 for two years (24 issues). Individual issues cost \$1.75. GSI reserves the right to change these prices without prior notice of any type. Back issues are available.

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This Month's Cover: "City Duty" by Robert Jimenez

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PERSONALS, CLASSIFIEDS, AND WHAT-NOTS. . .

Every current player in a GSI game is entitled to a free forty word submission to this column each issue, for each game they are in. Further submissions require a charge after the initial 40 words of \$2.00 per each additional 40 (41-80 words is \$2.00 etc.). GSI reserves the right to refuse material deemed unsuitable.

Middle-earth *FBM*

GAME 3

Zarendarger of Game #19:

The Witch-king has been squished. Now the odds are 4 to 6. Uvatha:

What happened to Elgaer? Did it go up in smoke? By the way, Eoder is still alive. I shall return to Morannon and Rhûn soon.

Baaltrac

Why do the Corsairs and Harad sit? They are afraid, of course. Come, bring your navies to my shores for a little rumble. There you shall meet your doom. So says Kurgan.

GAME 10

Akhorahil,

There's no reason to get nasty just because the Easterling have decided to join the winning side. The Eothraim request that the Dunlendings put aside their differences with Cardolan and join the Free Peoples as well.

GAME 11

Sindorella,

I am no "Oathbreaker", as you stated in your last message, for I'd made none. The only thing to be broken is you, which should be easy enough, seeing you possess no backbone as it is. Die well.

Bain

We beg anyone to slay us for we need to have our blaspheming tongues silenced!

AAARGH!!.....

Amroth/Thranduil
The Sanctimonious
Sindar Sisters

GAME 12

King Bain I-

Where are you? I see Warlord Thelor II has come out to play - party time again at Buhr Waldmarh? I'll be waiting...and recruiting.

-Warlord Tros Hesnef
Bane of the Northmen,
Scourge of the Eothraim

Evil Nations,

You guys are just too brave. Six of you take on North Gondor and brag about your victories. If my troops weren't so bloodthirsty, I'd let North Gondor defeat you all by himself.

Dunsul
Prince of South Gondor

Uvatha II,

Tros bullied a weak unprepared Dwarven army. I will never forget your numerous degrading statements as hundreds of Dwarf maidens wept for their fallen mates. May Eru's fire scorch your shriveled, blackened soul for eternity.

Bain I

Dispute at Buhr Waldmarh,

3100 Dwarves, plus 2300 Men of Arthedain, arrived here to object to Easterling use of Dwarven corpses as "wargame dummies". Two Easterling army commanders agreed - "Movin' Dwarves is more fun!" - and attacked!!! Serious mayhem followed.

GAME 13

Elrond is D-E-D, Ded! The Woodmen are next. My hordes are coming Veantar, Osgiliath will soon be mine! You can hide but you can't run!! Haha!!!

Ren the Unclean!!!!

GAME 14

This is really getting dull. Hey bad guys what are you doing!

Greetings!

Cardolan has fallen and my power grows. Those who oppose me beware for the Dunlendings are on the march. Where will they strike next? Soon you shall know and despair.

Lord Enion
Ruler of the Dun and Red Lands

GAME 16

Noldo Fairies,

Say where you belong or die! If I encounter any fairies far from home, I will give them a fatal dose of steel.

The Lost Savior of Sauron

GAME 18

Simon Sez I have blackmailers like Sinda Elves. Simon Sez I will reveal myself to all in Middle-earth in due time. Simon sez I will destroy any dark clown who steals, invades and/or bothers my territory.

Why did the Dwarves and Eothraim cross the road? Because the Sinda Elf told them to! Why did the Sinda Elf tell them to? Because he can!!!

Oracle Of Truth

GAME 19

Mighty Haradwaith shall no longer endure the crushing thumb of Sauron. We desire to be free. Therefore, Haradwaith has sided with the Free Peoples. We shall maintain our freedom while we crush the vermin of Sauron. Adûnaphel feel our wrath.

Zarendarger(22)

Lugarlûr along with ASHTURG's army were destroyed all too easily. Adûnaphel, where lies your so called army? It's hard to believe that a Nazgûl can be defeated so easily.

Zarendarger(22)

Journal Entry:

Progress southward has been steady and as the weather gets warmer the troops become more and more eager for battle. My only hope is that there will be evil armies left for us to fight.

Regent Meneldir

GAME 21

Hoarmûrath,

I salute you, for you have not given up, even after Tarondor destroyed Baltab's army and took Barad Perras, Vagaig destroyed your camps, and your assassins failed. May all my foes be as worthy.

Baaltrac

Hey, everyone!

Look how stupid the evils are. They attack the Corsairs, (Big threat.), and let the Gondors march in. This game will end soon. I wish they would attack me in force.

Eothraim rules!

Hey Rot N. Bart

You want to party? Meet me in the Northern Mirkwood. I'm going stomping.

Uthor

Rot N Bart here to share with flair that I am now FREE from neutrality & 'O! Witchy poo guess what you're thin & !! We stink it up!!

Rot N Bart of Rhudaur

The Corsairs are being attacked. Good doesn't help them. The Easterling are being attacked good doesn't help them. Good doesn't care. It's enough to make a Neutral go evil! Be careful good. One in five is the jackal.

Uthor

Dear Bad Guys,

You people must really organize your efforts to put up a battle against the Free Peoples is pathetic. Get your stuff together already. Work on an ally or two. Help each other out. Flank Mordor. Rssassinate all their leaders. Get a life. We won't join a losing team.

Message from the South

GAME 22

Dwarven Impudence Run Rampant,

All Free Peoples Accomplishments by turn #9:

The elimination of the Long Rider. A player position that was dropped on turn 2 and never picked up, not a very difficult victory.

Rhudaur (alone) accomplishments: The elimination of the active Woodmen player, defeat of all starting armies from Cardolan. The coordination of the assassination of Bain I (May he rot in pieces). To date I have faced armies from the Dwarves, Noldo Elves, Arthedain, Cardolan and the Woodmen, fully 50% of the starting Free Peoples nations, yet I still prosper. Why is that if the Free Peoples are so effective?

The Dwarves boast of their victory at Goblin Gate, while Northern Gondor is being dissected by the Nazgul of Mordor and the Dragon Lord is still active. My words may be propoganda, but they are true, none can dispute them! Military might alone will not be enough to assure victory against me even though the Dwarves, Arthedain and Cardolan (Yeah, Right!) attempt to invade me.

Thus speaks Melkor,
Lord of Rhudaur

GAME 23

The Storm King has come to Rhovanion.

Akhorahil

With the additional losses of their elite cavalry army, Regent Thuidemer and Lord Gisulf; the left of ten thousand; and the presence of two Nazgûl at the capital things look grim for the Eothraim. We still win.

Mahrcaed

Khamul, Khamul, come out to play or are you hiding for another day. The Khazad are anxious to fight. We'll see who dines on who tonight!

GAME 24

News Flash:

Ovatha II met the Blind Sorcerer's mobile Cavalry Training Center near Laoki. After completing a leisurely morning's training, Ovatha II said, "How kind of the Blind Sorcerer to provide training for my commanders and their troops."

Free Peoples,

United we have met the darkness, In hope we do meet the day. Continually striving together, we march into the fray. Orc Skulls crush beneath our hammers, as we beat the foeman down. Our friends who died will be avenged, we march toward Mordor town. Beware, Servants of Sauron: We come calling intending to stay. We bring bright swords and strong armies, and a ring to win the day.

Ironboot

PS - Don't go looking for rings in all the wrong places...

GAME 26

The Dunlendings have suffered attacks from Arthedain, Cardolan and Southern Gondor and have proven victorious every time. Now, like Rhudaur before them, they pledge their loyalty and their lives to Sauron.

Rh,

The smell of rotting flesh clings to my sinus and invigorates me. We shall come forward!

GAME 27

The Dwarven nation wishes to announce the signing of a formal treaty of alliance with the nations of Sinda Elves and the Woodmen. ANY attacks on ourselves or our Allies will be met with as much force as can be brought to bear - as the hordes of the Dragon Lord already have found out at the great battle of Sarn Lothdfuin. We also extend our hand in friendship to all other Free Peoples and those Neutrals who have Steadfastly resisted the lies and seduction of the Dark Servants.

Bain I

-Lord of the Khazad

GAME 28

Amroth was sent to the halls of mandos to prepare rooms for the elves who will join him shortly. Dûran of the Dragon Lord Dealt the Deadly Blow to the cowardly Sinda Leader. More obituaries next month!

Sikiche

Apologies are in order. Celdrahil took the Royal Lancers on a whirlwind vacation to the fabled towns of Mordor. Strangely, every town visited soon becomes a flaming ruin. This behavior understandably strains a welcome. Sorry.

Subedei Bahadur
Prince, Southern Gondor

This is your friendly Ice King. Tarondor are you still breathing? Your country is getting thrashed. I recommend you rename it Smolderdor. Princess Lassie Celdrahil you're a cowardly wimp,

face me like a man not the wimp
that you are.

Sire Cool Whip

Looking west over the Sea of
Rhûn, Uvatha saw that the great
storm, which had just blown away
the Easterlings, was coming his
direction. Running (which he does
very well) inside, he turned on the
weather channel and learned, much
to his dismay, that mighty hurricane
N.E.D. was upon him. He then
retired to his room and cleared out
his shorts.

Naurmegil

GAME 30

Gondor unites! Baltab's army
was destroyed. Baltab suffers from
grievous wounds. Nazog is taken
hostage. Death to Sauron! Servants
of the Dark, let your peoples be
free!

King Tarondor

Sauron,

Your puppets are weak. The
Easterlings have already joined the
Free People, you have lost control of
Mirkwood, and soon the skull of
Khamul will grace my mantle. This is
a war, not prep school.

Beoraborn
Lord of Beornings

GAME 31

Tremble you weaklings, cower
in fear. I am your ruler, land, sea,
and air. Immense in my girth, erect
I stand tall. A Middle Age Murderer -
I am Hard Harry! Holy wars.....The
Punishment Due Dying time is here.

So, four agents enter Northern
Gondor Territory. So What! You guys
think your good. Well so far I am not
impressed.

Northern Gondor

My lord! Good news! At the
mere threat of attack the Witch
King town Surrendered to our
forces! Messengers have also
arrived indicating that the Witch
King Army was totally annihilated!
It is time to clear out his Rathole
with Rhudaurian steel.

Arfanhil

The Tower of the Moon is mine.
Soon I will be walking the Halls of
Minas Arnor and warming my hands
on the Embers of Nimloth. Death to
Gondor.

Ren The Unclean

Two Nazgul down, seven more
and a lieutenant to go.

The Khazad-dum Daily

GAME 33

The Easterlings are dogs. They
are not to be trusted but destroyed.
All nations good and evil alike,
should rise up against the Goats.
Ovatha II is nothing but
dishonorable half - breed. I will
burn your towns and your people in
them.

Mountain Man

Cloud Lord,

What's that in the distance?
Why it's the Easterling Hordes.
Coming to a town Near You! Prepare
Ji Indur. I will shine in your capital.

Ovatha II

Hail Fire King,

Your strategic genius
is astounding (chuckle, chuckle). I
can't wait to see what the
remainder of your forces (what
little is left) has in store for me.

Naurmegil

GAME 34

In the beginning Sauron said
"Let there be death." So it shall be
for all who oppose Sauron's will.
Whom among the so called FREE
PEOPLES shall be first to perish.
Hmmm... Perhaps...

Zarendarger (17)

GAME 35

As I arrive in Endor for a third
time, I once again find Dunedain
blood in my veins. The only change
is that I am advising Argeleb II
instead of Tarondor. Let the conflict
begin.

Baaltroc

I have no time for fence-
sitting mug wumps. The first time I
hear of two neutrals huddling for
warmth in a so-called "defensive
alliance" I'm attacking.

The Toxic Tyrant

GAME 36

Free People Beware!!!!

I've tightened the barbed wire
holding on my mask tighter than it's
ever been before. The PAIN is
TREMENDOUS.... and I BLAME IT ALL ON
YOU!!!! Have a nice day. Neutrals,
do keep in touch.

Ren the Unclean

Doom, doom, doom, call the
voices of the Dark. Gloom, gloom,
gloom, the voices say to hark. The

Dark Servants are here, the Free
Peoples awake. Save what you hold
dear, yet, you cannot run from the
quake.

Dark Soul

GAME 39

It saddens me to see the fair
realm of Endor torn asunder by war.
Peace should be among us all. Send
your emissaries to explain, to my
heart and to my mind, why war
should take place.

Jebel Noyon, Haradwaith

STATE OF WAR

GAME 77

Oh, Ashely you want to get
some experience well then, 1. Get a
Girl! 2. Join a new Game! Because
this one is over!

California! (9)

GAME 79

Presidents with whom calleth
the people of mine treasonous. So
he does and so too calls forth the
death of DC! Maine is prepared to do
whatever is necessary to win. The
LA Riots were nothing compared
to.....State of War!

EARTHWOOD - THE SEA KINGS

GAME 40

Where are all the braggarts
boasts and prediction of future
glory? Let's talk it up some! Oh by
the way don't cry, Colmain. The
Amazonians are still in the game.

The Voice of Reason

Wanted:

Associates for our quest
please inquire.

Minute Aide
"The Exterminator"

As we dance prance & glance
about the country side I have seen
the cowardly human warrior #25
run & hide. I ask for the verdict on
him. We request only sincere
followers. Inquire.

Minute Aide
"The Exterminator"

Responses to the Editor:**Gentlemen!**

Please consider the fate of Earthwood. I have tried many other games
and prefer Earthwood over all of them. Earthwood is a real classic with
plenty of miles left on it!!!!

Scott Roark

As the editor of next years school newspaper and a frequent reader
and writer in Whispers of the Wood and other publications, I can only
compliment you on your excellent job. Keep up the good work!

John P Martin
- Baron Blitz

Story of ME-PBM...

DEATH OF A LEADER AND HERO:

The Tale of the Second Battle of Fornost
By Mark A. Weiskircher

It was a cool foggy morning, not
unusual for this time of the year in the
old realm of Arthedain. The Dunland
army had just arrived at Fornost Erain
the night before. The former capital of
Arthedain was much less grand than it
had been in times not so long ago. It
had been overrun by the foul minions
of the Witch-King of Angmar a few
months ago. A smell now covered the
whole area. It was a smell of death
and fear.

General Enion, High Chieftain of
the Dunnish Clans, had never seen
Fornost before so the difference was
not noticed by him. All his thoughts
were focused on taking this major
town off the Witch-King's hands. He
knew it would be tough, but this was
the Witch-King's main force and it had
to be dealt with.

The advanced scouts had warned
him of a 3,000 troop army under
General Dancu. This caused the General
some anxiety. He had 4,280 troops
under his command. They were the
cream of Dunland. 582 Elite
Charioteers and 582 Horsemen were
the backbone of his force. He also had
1750 Archers to throw in the pot.
Dancu had 1300 Heavy Horsemen in
his command and the walls for cover.
It was becoming more and more
apparent to him that the Battle of
Fornost would be a bloody affair. He
wasn't wrong.

Enion had kicked around several
ideas with his commander prior to
their arrival. They considered trying to
move away and circumvent this
stronghold and perhaps make a run
for the capital, Carn Dum. After much
debate it was decided that the army

would attack Dancu. Whatever was left
would attempt to siege the city until
either Arfanhil of Rhudaur or King
Bain I could arrive to help out. Enion
felt he needed to do something to give
his men some confidence in the
upcoming battle. He picked up
Bloodrunner as he left the tent to do
battle. As he did so, he mentally swore
to kill Dancu before the battle was
engaged.

The armies were arrayed in the
hilly area before the once great gates
of the town. Dancu had deployed his
forces to put themselves between the
Dunmen and Fornost. This gave them
the benefit of the fortifications of the
city. The Dunnish forces were arrayed
in the standard battle formation with
the archers to the rear, the cavalry on
the flanks and the footmen anchoring
the middle.

General Enion looked over the
deployment of the troops. The men of
Dunland looked ready for anything.
The plaid pinions on the chariots and
pikes hung limp in the damp air. It
looked like the fog was going to linger
into the day. It was time to get on with
this. He conferred with Warlord
Daonghlas, his second, over the plan of
attack. Satisfied that all was arranged,
Enion and Daonghlas took a small
escort and headed into the hilly field
between the two armies for a parley.
Immediately a small party detached
from the opposing horde of Trolls and
Horsemen. Enion and his escort rode
out to meet them.

The foul form of Dancu arrived
with Ulgarin the Enchanter and a small
contingent of Orcs. Dancu skipped the
formalities and issued a personal
insult to Enion. Enion had intended the
same so he slipped off the back of his
mount. Dancu did the same. A hasty
circle was formed around them.
General Dancu turned and drew Fire
Mace from his mount. General Enion
tasted fear for the first time in his life.
It wasn't Dancu as much as the
weapon. With a gut-wrenching
certainty, he knew that weapon for

what it was destined to be: his death.
He stepped forward boldly, but in his
heart he knew he was facing the last
moments of his life. He realized he had
made his first and last mistake by
facing Dancu and he would never see
the foothills of his home again. So be it,
he thought, if this is how I am to die, I
will do it well.

They saluted each other and the
death duel began. It was a fight
between two great warriors. They
feinted and parried for a full minute
with each dealing minor wounds to the
other. Enion gave Dancu pause by
dealing him a slashing wound very
close to his throat. After several
minutes, Enion grew tired. Dancu
stepped to the side of a weak lunge
and crushed Enion's skull with a
devastating blow. It was over, General
Enion, High Chieftain of the Dunnish
Clans, was dead. Dancu wiped blood
out of his eyes and spit on the lifeless
form.

Bloodrunner fell from Enion's
lifeless hand and miraculously landed
near Daonghlas. Warlord Daonghlas
picked the weapon up and felt a rage
that had to be satisfied. He wanted to
finish Dancu off, but he knew it was
dishonorable to challenge a man who
was sorely wounded, even if that man
was slime. Because of that, he directed
his challenge at the nearest enemy,
Enchanter Ulgarin.

The fight was over in seconds.
Daonghlas was berserker crazed over
the death of his commander and
kinsman. He suffered a minor scratch
from a missile spell and then promptly
slew Ulgarin like he was a deer. The
blow opened Ulgarin up from throat to
groin. Daonghlas wiped Bloodrunner
off on Ulgarin's cloak and turned to his
army.

He did not look back on the short
ride to his army. Tears of rage almost
touched his face. Now was not the time
to grieve, he knew. He was in
command now. He must finish this.
Suddenly, he heard the roar of cavalry.
He turned and saw that the forces of

Angmar were charging! He kicked his horse's flanks and screamed the order to charge.

The elite Charioteers of Dunland were having their day. The Trolls fell back before them and it looked as though the day would at last go the way of the Dunmen. Murazor himself stepped forward and spoke Words of Death while wielding Nallagurth. His efforts were countered by Eribhen, with Ghostbane, and two other Dunning mages who were casting defensive spells. Humanoids were dying everywhere. Then from out of

the fog, nearly invisible, came a great Ice Drake. Murazor commanded it by the name Lomaw.

Lomaw swooped down on the glorious chariots of Dunland and froze the whole lot where they fought. The tide turned and the Army of Dunland was doomed. The remnants of the army fought well, but between Lomaw and the death of their beloved commander, they lost hope. The battle was lost and the cream of Dunland lay dead or scattered. It was the saddest day Dunland had ever seen.

NOTE: This story is based on actual occurrences in ME #3.

The Treasure Trove

By: Will Parker

There was gold, silver, and mithril I say,
Piled ten feet high and perhaps even more.
I saw with my own eyes where it did lay,
In yonder mountains, on a cavern floor.
Jewels, swords, and treasures beyond compare,
Did catch and hold my eager, greedy sight.
I did not know it for a dragon's lair,
Until a pillar of flame split the night.
Then I saw him, so awful to behold,
A dragon with eyes that glowed red with fire.
His name was Throckmaw, a serpent of old,
Believe me I tell you, I am no liar.
He regarded me with cold chilling eyes,
And from his throat came a musical voice.
"I care not for the taste of sneaking spies,"
He said, leaving me one life giving choice,
So I turned away, out the cave I dove,
And let old Throckmaw keep his treasure trove.

Story of ME-PBM...

MODERN WAR PRINCIPLES IN ME-PBM

By Lt. Mark A. Weiskircher

I have been working hard to become an officer in the United States Air Force. I recently achieved my goal, and in my studies to "Aim High", I have learned quite a bit about military doctrine and principles. I would like to share some of this learning with all of you. Note that my examples are not the only ones, nor even the best, in

some cases. My goal is to make you aware of the Principles of Modern Warfare and give you some examples of how they can carry over into ME-PBM. The rest is up to you.

The Principles of War are generally accepted major truths which have proven successful in the art and science of waging war over the years. I

will be using modern principles and applying them to Middle Earth PBM. Most of the principles are very basic, so making sense of them in the context of a fantasy setting is not too complicated.

The first thing to realize about principles is that they are not "gospel". Each should be treated with relative importance, depending on the situation, and some can be disregarded totally from time to time. A military commander must use his/her judgement in making these decisions. The principles of war are not separate nor distinct from each other either. They are interrelated and interacting elements of warfare. To be ultimately successful requires a deeper understanding than just memorizing mere principles, but it is a good place to start.

The most basic principle is the need for a clear and concise **OBJECTIVE**. This objective must be realistic, otherwise you can become frustrated. By setting a goal, and reaching it, you can give yourself a mental boost, and reach out to the next objective. In ME-PBM it is very important to have a basic objective in mind for each stage of the game. These objectives can range from having Elrond cast Perceive Secrets until you know something of your enemies' VP's to taking out the Witch-King by Turn 10. (In the latter example, you would also have specific objectives, be they military, economic, or political, to carry this out.) The important thing is to have an objective in mind and work toward that. Be sure to prioritize the things you need to do. You mustn't become too "spread out" by trying to take on more than your nation can handle.

Unless **OFFENSIVE** action is taken, military victory is seldom possible. This is especially true in ME. If you sit on your rear long enough somebody will come along and knock you right out of your seat. This is not a good thing. By taking the offensive,

you are choosing the time and places where battles will occur, not your opponent. Offensive action is normally employed to achieve objectives. (See how they mesh together?) In ME, being on the offensive is important for a nation's economic health. Troops that are defending against an attack that isn't happening are a waste of money. Troops need to be constantly recruited, trained, upgraded, and then USED! If the troops aren't being used, they aren't needed. This is a very important principle to live by.

SURPRISE is the attack of an enemy at a time, place, and in a manner for which the enemy is neither prepared nor expecting an attack. This is a very important item to possess as a military commander. The element of surprise can often turn the tide of a war, even if all other elements are going against you.

Surprise is obtained through:

1) **Security**: If you are planning on telling your entire allegiance everything you possess or know from the beginning of the game, you will get hurt. A nation cannot achieve surprise if all of its plans are known to all. Don't think your "allies" won't betray your plans to attack with Bain's army on Turn 7. If you are powerful, and it won't hurt them, they may just tip off the other side. After all, there can only be one.

2) **Deception**: One way you can preserve security is by deception. Give some of your allies the wrong info and see if the other side finds out the info. Also, a good trick is to let on about how weak you are to an enemy (Using a Neutral for this is the best way) right before you attack with a huge army.

3) **Audacity**: Be bold, not wimpy. By taking a risk and doing something totally off the wall, you may really screw up your enemies' plans. Admittedly, sometimes this will backfire, but for the most part,

audacity is a good tool for achieving surprise.

4) Originality: Also, don't get stuck in a rut of doing the same things the same way all the time. Believe me, if you attack every time with charge, people will wise up and ambush you. Also, if you are known for sabotaging the food stores right before an assault, your agents are going to start getting killed by alert guards. The point is, be different in each situation, if possible. This will help with surprise.

5) Timely Execution: I always keep in mind the old Earthwood Maxim, "Start to attack a turn before you think you're ready; that way you know the other guy won't be expecting it." In other words, don't be overly cautious. Attack when the enemy is weak and you are strong.

You also must have accurate intelligence information so that you can exploit the weaknesses of the enemy. Recruit those beautiful Agents! Personally, I wouldn't be caught dead without a large contingent of agents to make me aware of all the goings on of my enemies. I guess it comes from just being nosy, but it has kept me alive so far.

Another important job for agents is **SECURITY**. Security is taking continuous, positive measures to prevent surprise and preserve freedom of action. Security involves denial of useful information to the enemy, and active scouting of enemy forces and intentions. Surprise, as mentioned above, is a very important element of a war and you mustn't be caught with your fly open. Again, effective intelligence is the key to security and surprise in ME-PBM. Intelligence efforts minimize the potential for enemy actions to achieve surprise or maintain the initiative.

Intelligence can be obtained from your allegiance members, Neutrals, and even some of the enemy. Don't burn any bridges. Keep all lines of communication open. Uncover Secrets and Perceive Secrets are also

very useful in determining the intentions of your enemies. Another way is to send an agent to find out what the army consists of and to keep track of the stores of a pop center. This can be very important for knowing when the army is moving out. If a pop center has a lot of food that comes in and then disappears, it probably went to the army. If that is the case, it must be moving out! This can be done with no risk, as well. The agent can scout the army from a distance, and you can use a mage to keep track of the pop center. That way none of your characters are at risk and you still get a lot of useful information. You can also scout for characters in your capital every so often. You may get lucky and spot an enemy before he can do any harm. Also, be sure and keep a close eye on your turn map. A lot of things can be revealed there.

Modern war is a complex interaction of moves and counter-moves. In Middle-Earth, it is a little simpler, but not much. After all, all you have to do is give the order to move. Right? Wrong. **MANEUVER** is the movement of friendly forces in relation to enemy forces. Even in ME, it is a very important component of a nation's war strategy. Good commanders will seek to move their forces selectively against an enemy's weak points.

I neglected to use my own advice on this subject in ME #3. Myself and my allies had been campaigning against the Witch-King for some time. I was playing Dunland. I was given the task of taking Fornost Erain from Murazor. I was faced with a comparable fighting force under Dancu. I should have gone around him and feinted toward the nearly undefended Carn Dum to make him move away from the city. What I did instead, was foolishly lose my army to a foe I had underestimated. The moral of the story is, attack your enemy at his weak points and make him fight

where it will give YOU the best advantage.

The final principle that can be easily applied to ME-PBM is the concept of **LOGISTICS**. Logistics is the principle of sustaining men in combat by obtaining, moving, and maintaining war fighting potential. In ME, the most important item to an army in the field is food. Without it, they suffer in morale, and worse, they are slowed in their movement. The only point here: make sure you can sustain your army in the field with food and replacements before starting a major

campaign. This will prevent a lot of heartache later, when you can't reach that enemy stronghold and help out a friend who may be stopped at the gates.

Obviously, this is not an exhaustive account of all the principles of war, nor does it cover all the aspects of Middle-Earth. Hopefully, what this article has done is give the new would-be General the basic tools he/she will need to confront and conquer the enemy. Good Luck to you, and Good Gaming!

NOTE: The principles of war and the definitions of each were taken from Air Force Manual 1-1, Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force 1987. The opinions expressed herein are purely those of the author.

Poem of ME-PBM...

Passing the Torch by John Hunter

In the gray tower, he does stand looking out upon the land. Images playing through his mind of friends and places long gone bye. First he's a young man beginning a home and then a great warrior of far reaching fame. Wearing a suit of plate mail which is dented and worn each representing times that were joyous and forlorn. So many memories stirring inside yet through it all is great pride. Even should his name some day fade the result of his courage can never be taken away. Learn this lesson as I have done and may fate be kind to you my son.

Lothlorien

by Nathan J Helmers

A longing dwells beneath the leaves
Of the wondrous and mighty mallorn trees.

A longing for the songs of old,
That elves once played on harps of gold.

With voices fair they sang of kings,
Of heroes, of foes, of beautiful things.
They sang to remember all that which had past,
The things in their hearts that they wanted to last.

They sang their songs for many a year,
But they will never again sing them here.
Gone from this place they will forever be,
For west they have sailed across the sea.

Corsair War Song

By: Will Parker

Heave ho, heave ho, onward to war we go,
Our ships are lean and our blades deadly sharp,
Don't worry, my dear, we won't feed the carp.

An oar in hand we row across the land,
Seeking our enemies where they may hide,
If they do fight back, well, at least they tried

There be cities to trash and foes to bash,
As we stroll across the foreigner's land,
With shield on the arm and sword in the hand.

Gathering the loot, it is time to scoot,
We hurry back to our waiting warships,
Don't you just love our great vacation trips?

Mordor

by Nathan J Hellmers

In the Land of Mordor, the shadows reign
And keep all things in parched pain.
For all things here thirst for light of day,
But with crack of whip, hopes fade away.

And in this land where Sauron dwells,
Within the very crack of hell,
He wrought a ring of gold so fair,
Which became a burden for the world to bear.

Here came Frodo and Sam to do a deed,
And with fall of Smeagol it did succeed.
So thus the reign of evil ended,
Though the hurts it caused never fully mended.

Survival Skills in Earthwood

by Chris Chen

This strategy article will deal more with the basics of survival in EARTHWOOD (and for that matter most PBM's) rather than giving away secrets about the game (which are probably more exciting discovered than read). Therefore, let me

proceed to outline tips that have helped me through EARTHWOOD.

Tip one: When you get your first turn in EARTHWOOD try to feel out your strengths and weaknesses. Basically, if you are a strong race (e.g. The Giant) your

random events will tend to be worse, and how successful you are in acquiring NPC's tend to be poor. On the other hand, if you are a very weak race then you can expect better random events. If you are a Human Warrior then you will find it amazingly easy for you to acquire NPC's and thus you should find as many as possible as well as finding a base of operations (ruins). Also, as a Human Warrior your morale starts higher than any other player and one of your NPC's tend to equal 2-3 of an opponent's NPC (assuming they are the same NPC). If you are a wizard then you need to immediately find a fund for your research as the higher your level gets the more powerful your spells get (a friend has a create gold spell). A good thing to offer the funding race is repayment upon acquiring the create gold spell and/or the use of your magical abilities. A wizard also needs to find a base of operations.

Tip Two: Send a diplomatic msg to EVERY player in the game! Diplomacy is the name of the game in Earthwood and without it you might as well be playing a board game. The msg does not have to be long just give your address, player number, and race and say you would like to talk a possible alliance.

Tip Three: Although this is related to Tip two I decided to make it a different category. Gather as much information as possible! Trade city info, map info, secrets known about EARTHWOOD info, Gossip about who is attacking who etc. This is the second most important thing in EARTHWOOD as the

Diplomat with the most info is going to win out over the war-mongering attacker. (In other words, Brains are better than Brawn).

Tip Four: Although you should try to set up alliances don't make any real ties until you know most every player in the game. That way you will be able to judge who offers the best for your needs.

Tip Five: DO NOT provoke other races without just cause. This is the most common error of every new player in EARTHWOOD! Find out who your real enemies are instead of waging a war against someone for the hell of it! And if you do plan to wage war find out as much as you can about who you are going to attack! Find out who his allies are, (what is his strength in troops), if he is a enthusiastic player or not, etc. If you are provoked don't automatically assume that the player meant to attack you (ie. really had a CAUSE). Nine times out of ten you are just being attacked by a player that does not know what else to do or is getting bored of the game because he is not DIPLOMATIC! Send the attacker a card saying you would rather have him as an ally than a foe and if he is still intent on destroying you, well then you get your allies together and make chop suey out of him.!

Tip Six: Don't declare a war! When you wage a war or attack someone make a surprise attack. Usually you will be able to take the player's city if you plan well enough.

Tip Seven: Ask questions! GSI is one of the few very nice moderators who care about their

players and go out of their way to answer questions! (Although, they should be short questions). With the info you gather from asking questions you can trade it with another race for city locations or data on that unknown race!

Well, I'm running out of steam for now so I will try to continue this article next time. May your every endeavor succeed and may your every enemy burn in the Fires of Hell!

A letter from Ironboot, Marshal General of the Free Peoples to the alumni of the Unified Command School:

Salutations, Captains and Commanders!

My colleagues, by now you may have noticed that the agents in the employ of the Dark Servants are well able to penetrate our vaults. This means that the gold we have on reserve often ends up serving the interests of Sauron, rather than the interest of the Free Peoples.

There are several ways to defend our gold supplies. Often suggested is the route of guarding the main vaults in the capital. However, there are two drawbacks to this. Early on, the enemy does not steal from the capital, but rather they steal from our outlying towns; so we still lose the gold. The second drawback is that agents who are stealing are promoted twice as fast, on average, as agents who are guarding. Therefore, as the months progress, the likely result of guarding the gold in the capital is the loss of both the gold and the agent guarding it.

In fact, the only people faster than the enemy in reaching our gold are the masters of the caravans.

Therefore I recommend this defense against theft. On each turn,

carefully calculate what your maintenance costs will be. Add to that the costs of any improvements to your realm and the cost associated with planting new camps. Then spend all the rest of your gold on the product of your choice. This will limit the amount of the theft to a handful of gold that you could not spend.

In the future, when your income may not meet your need for gold, you may sell the stored product to raise the necessary funds.

Some may complain that when you sell the product back, you lose gold in the process. True, but this loss of gold does not result in the support of your enemies. Further, if you consistently maintain a minimal gold reserve, enemy agents may decide to hunt elsewhere, someplace more profitable. Then when time comes that you wish to Name New Characters, Research Spells, you may risk a large enough gold reserve to do so with less likelihood of the enemy stealing it before you use it. Consider well the lessons contained herein.

May the life of your enemy be in your hand,

Ironboot

The Hall Of Heroes

State of War

GAME 76 - In 20 turns the alliance known as the Wings of Doom used all means at their disposal to overthrow the government to form a New Federation of States. This effort was spearheaded by player #8, who received support from his allies, players #9 and 10. We congratulate you on a job well done.

Carthwood-The Sea Kings

GAME 40 - It took the alliance of the Nous Sommes Du Fromage only 34 turns to take full control of the seas. This powerful alliance used their cunning skills to sink all who opposed them to become Sea Kings. Our hats go off to the members of this alliance, players #12, 16, 18, 19 and 23. Congrats to you.